

SOPHISTICATED ABSTRACTION

Yves Zurstrassen, who walks the boundary between the venerable cultures of French and Netherlandish painting, brings new fields of investigation and new life to abstraction. Landau Contemporary will showcase the topicality of paintings produced exclusively for this occasion.

Heir to gestural abstract painting, Zurstrassen has defined a new direction in line with those who, keeping geometric abstraction at a distance, have opted for a more formal, expressive and sophisticated language. However, his particularity stems from a creative process that he developed around the year 2000 and which has fundamentally transformed his painting: the techniques of application and removal – *collage* - and its opposite – *décollage*.

The general principle is the application of different shapes of fine paper on successive layers of colour and their removal; thus the canvas is primarily handled from background to surface, a phase during which collages and then, in the opposite direction, *décollages* reveal preceding states of surface and colour, a tension between the starting point of the concept and the hazards of realisation.

The ethos of the painter is clearly evident in the studio that this fifty-one year old artist has set up over recent years. It is a perfect workshop, equipped with carefully selected instruments and materials, with rows of jars containing pigments, drying agents and collections of painting tools. This former factory hall has skylights and side windows and is flooded with daylight. Here, Zurstrassen works by natural north light, following the course of the day.

The '*weltbild*' that this artist formulates in his work has a flowing energy of sophistication, be it in monotonous shades of grey, black and white, or in dazzling displays of colour. Zurstrassen portrays nothing less than an individual open to the future, whose consciousness combines exciting new variations on existent reality, notions of freedom, of sensuality and beauty.

I hope you will enjoy the discovery of this exhibition. Yves Zurstrassen is an exceptionally talented artist with a warm and engaging personality, who is surely destined to travel far on the international art stage, and Canada is another step on this journey.

- Robert Landau



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